

SENATE, No. 1590

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 217th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 16, 2016

Sponsored by:

Senator RONALD L. RICE

District 28 (Essex)

Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators Cunningham, Cruz-Perez, Ruiz, Kyrillos and A.R.Bucco

SYNOPSIS

Requires boards of education to conduct student vision screenings that include evaluation of visual acuity and binocular vision.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/24/2016)

1 AN ACT concerning student vision screenings in public schools and
2 supplementing chapter 40 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

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5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

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8 1. a. A board of education shall conduct vision screenings for
9 students in kindergarten through grade 10. The vision screenings,
10 at a minimum, shall include an evaluation of visual acuity and
11 binocular vision skills, including convergence.

12 b. A board of education shall conduct the vision screenings
13 required by subsection a. of this section in accordance with
14 standards jointly established by the Commissioner of Education and
15 the Commissioner of Health, including standards for the frequency
16 of the vision screenings. The Commissioner of Education shall
17 collaborate with each school district on the procedures to be
18 implemented to conduct the vision screenings.

19 c. A board of education shall notify the parent or guardian of
20 any student whose vision screening detects a suspected vision-
21 related problem.

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23 2. The State Board of Education, in consultation with the
24 Commissioner of Health, shall promulgate regulations pursuant to
25 the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1
26 et seq.), necessary to effectuate the provisions of this act.

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28 3. This act shall take effect in the first full school year
29 following the date of enactment.

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32 STATEMENT

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34 State Board of Education regulations at N.J.A.C.6A:16-2.2(1)(2)
35 currently require boards of education to conduct visual acuity
36 screenings biennially for students in kindergarten through grade 10.
37 This bill would codify the requirement to screen students in
38 kindergarten through grade 10 for visual acuity and additionally
39 require that the vision screenings include an evaluation of binocular
40 vision skills, including convergence. The vision screenings will be
41 conducted in accordance with standards jointly established by the
42 Commissioner of Education and the Commissioner of Health,
43 including standards for the frequency of the screenings. The bill
44 requires notification to the parent or guardian of any student whose
45 vision screening detects a suspected vision-related problem.

46 Binocular vision refers to the ability for both eyes to work
47 together simultaneously. Binocular vision disorders, including
48 convergence insufficiency, can greatly impact a child's ability to

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1 learn and may initially be misinterpreted as neurodevelopmental
2 delays or learning disabilities. Screening students for binocular
3 vision in addition to visual acuity will assist in the early
4 identification of children with vision problems, enabling them to
5 obtain appropriate treatment that can improve educational outcomes
6 and quality of life.